

**DECEMBER 19, 2023
JASPER, FLORIDA**

REGULAR SESSION

The Board of County Commissioners, Hamilton County, Florida, met in regular session on Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room, 207 Northeast First Street, Jasper, Florida. Present were Commissioners Travis Erixton, Jimmy Murphy, Robert Brown, Robbie Roberson and Richie McCoy, a full Board being present. Also present were County Attorney Andy Decker and County Coordinator Gary Godwin.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman McCoy and led in prayer by Commissioner Erixton with the Pledge of Allegiance being led by Chairman McCoy.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Motion by Commissioner Brown to approve the consent agenda. Second was made by Commissioner Erixton, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

REQUEST TO REMOVE LANGUAGE IN COUNTY PERSONNEL REGULATIONS REGARDING EMPLOYEES THAT QUALIFY AS A POLITICAL CANDIDATE (SECTION 3.04 POLITICAL ACTIVITY PARAGRAPH D) – JASON CRIBBS

Jason Cribbs discussed section 3.04 (D) of the Board's personnel rules and regulations with the Board and requested that the Board consider changing the statement (any employee who qualifies as a candidate for the Board of County Commissioners must resign from employment with the county and allow the employee to only be required to resign their employment if appointed or upon winning an election and being a Board member). County Attorney Andy Decker explained the policy and his research on the issue and referenced F.S. 99.012. Mr. Decker advised the Board that most counties have a similar policy and recommended that the policy remain in place based on his understanding and research. Mr. Cribbs stated that he had discussed the issue with the State Commission on Ethics and the only requirement was that an individual is not allowed to politic on the job.

After further discussion, the Board agreed by unanimous consent to allow the policy to remain intact.

MINOR SUBDIVISION REVIEW AND APPROVAL – SD 23-01 ERIK AND STEPHANIE LITTLETON

Chairman McCoy recessed the regular Board meeting and called the public hearing (SD 23-01) to order at 6:24 p.m.

Land Use Administrator Mathew Morgan explained the action before the Board as an application from Erik and Stephanie Littleton for a final subdivision plat for certain property located in Hamilton County. Mr. Littleton explained the proposed plans for the property and answered questions from the Board.

There being no further questions or comments from the Board, Chairman McCoy closed the public hearing and reconvened the Board meeting at 6:27 p.m.

- Motion by Commissioner Roberson to approve SD 23-01 as presented. Second was made by Commissioner Brown, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

SHIP / CDBG PROGRAM / CDBG-CV – STATUS REPORT

Ship Administrator Spencer Nabors provided the Board with a status report for the Ship, CDBG, CDBG-CV and HHRP grants. Mr. Nabors advised the Board that several Ship projects are in the construction phase and stated that the three (3) year Ship compliance monitoring by FHFC has been completed and the review closed with no findings. As to the CDBG grant, Mr. Nabors presented the Board with a list of homeowners for the Board's approval and discussed the combination of Ship projects.

- Motion by Commissioner Murphy to approve the homeowners list for the CDBG grant as recommended by Mr. Nabors. Second was made by Commissioner Roberson, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Mr. Nabors also presented the Board with a list of homeowners for approval through the HHRP grant. Mr. Nabors explained that several of the homes will be leveraged with the White Springs CDBG grant if they are funded.

- Motion by Commissioner Brown to approve the homeowner list for the HHRP grant as recommended by Mr. Nabors. Second was made by Commissioner Erixton, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Mr. Nabors then presented the Board with a Housing Budget outlining the amounts and expenditures for each of the grants.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS – STATUS REPORT AND REQUESTS

The Board reviewed the REDI agreement as presented by staff.

- Motion by Commissioner Roberson to approve the REDI agreement contingent upon review by County Attorney Andy Decker with the final approval to be Chairman McCoy. Second was made by Commissioner Murphy, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

The Board also reviewed the final purchase agreement with Lifeline for the Mobile Health Unit.

- Motion by Commissioner Erixton to approve the final purchase agreement with Lifeline for the Mobile Health Unit. Second was made by Commissioner Brown, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

ROAD PAVING PROJECTS – STATUS EREPORT

Greg Bailey, with North Florida Professional Services, provided the Board with a status report on the current road projects.

LAKE BAISDEN LOOP – Jared Lizotte, with Locklear and Associates, advised the Board that the paving project is nearing completion, and the contractor is constructing the box culvert.

GIBSON PARK BOAT RAMP – Mr. Bailey stated that FWC is still reviewing the plans for the project for final approval.

CROSSROADS FIRE STATION – Mr. Bailey stated that the plans are

complete and will be reviewed by Board staff prior to being let for bids.

JOBS GROWTH GRANT – Mr. Bailey advised the Board that he is continuing to work on the design, drainage and wetlands delineation.

5 HOLE BOAT RAMP – Mr. Bailey advised the Board that the permit application for the 5 Hole boat ramp project has been submitted to SRWMD for final comments.

CR-25A – Mr. Bailey advised that the final plans are under review by FDOT with the project to be let for bids upon final approval.

SR6 / I-75 WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY – Mr. Bailey advised the Board that the permit renewal has been submitted to FDEP.

WHITE SPRINGS – CHURCH WALK-WAY – Mr. Bailey advised the Board that a crosswalk with signage could be constructed by the Road Department for the First Baptist Church in White Springs. The Board discussed the situation and agreed to make a final decision at the next Board meeting.

SR 129 LIFTSTATION – County Attorney Andy Decker advised the Board that he has drafted the legal description and forwarded the deed to Ms. Wolfe for her desired location of the lift station.

CR 137 CAUTION LIGHTS – The Board briefly discussed the request from Nutrien to relocate the caution light on CR-137 to the new entrance into the Suwannee River Chemical Plant.

FIVE YEAR ROAD PLAN – The Board discussed the Five-Year Road Plan and prioritized the following three (3) road projects for submittal to FDOT: 1) CR 141 from Crossroads (SR6) to Jennings 2) CR 6 East from Jasper to the end of the paved shoulders 3) CR 751 from SR 6 to the Nobles Ferry bridge.

- Motion by Commissioner Roberson to submit the previously prioritized list of road projects to FDOT for consideration. Second was made by Commissioner Erixton, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

The Board discussed several roads that have been damaged by State contractors during the storm debris removal. County Coordinator Gary Godwin stated that the damages should be eligible for FEMA reimbursement. Mr. Bailey also stated that the State currently has funding for Public Safety Complexes.

STORM RELATED ISSUES – DISCUSSION AND REQUESTS

County Coordinator Gary Godwin provided the Board with an update on the storm debris removal and reminded the Board of the meeting on Thursday, December 21st at the EOC at 10:00 a.m. to discuss the positives and negatives for the response to Hurricane Idalia. The Board announced that they will be in attendance.

AMNESTY DAYS – HAMILTON COUNTY LANDFILL

The Board discussed having amnesty days to allow the community to bring items to the Landfill for disposal. After a brief discussion, the Board agreed to address the issue in March and possibly set the days for a Friday and Saturday during the month of April.

ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES

County Coordinator Gary Godwin discussed with the Board the need to hire a part-time position for Animal Control. Mr. Godwin stated that the employee would work approximately twenty (20) hours per week at \$15.00 per hour.

- Motion by Commissioner Roberson to approve the part-time position for Animal Control as requested. Second was made by Commissioner Erixton, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Mr. Godwin discussed the current Animal Control facility and will put together a cost estimate to upgrade the current facility and seek possible grant funding for a new facility.

DISCUSSION OF LAWN MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR POSITION

County Coordinator Gary Godwin explained the current situation with the Lawn Maintenance crew and the need for additional supervision. Mr. Godwin requested that the Board consider allowing a position change for a Recreation Department employee with an increase in compensation of \$1.00 per hour for the supervisor.

- Motion by Commissioner Erixton to approve the position change from the Recreation Department to the Lawn Maintenance Crew as requested. Second was made by Commissioner Roberson, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

DISCUSSION OF DEPARTMENT HEAD OVERTIME COMPENSATION

County Coordinator Gary Godwin advised the Board that the overtime issue has been resolved.

DUKE ENERGY INVOICES FOR SERVICES PERFORMED AT 1846 HAMILTON AVE. LODGE JENNINGS

County Attorney Andy Decker provided the Board with an update as to the negotiations with PRG for the damage to the Duke Energy transformers. Mr. Decker recommended that the Board accept the last offer from PRG in the amount of \$25,000.

- Motion by Commissioner Roberson to accept the settlement amount from PRG in the amount of \$25,000 as recommended by County Attorney Andy Decker. Second was made by Commissioner Murphy, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

APPROVE BILLS

- Motion by Commissioner Roberson to approve the bills (vouchers 164318 – 164657 and checks 072436 - 072544). Second was made by Commissioner Murphy, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

DISCUSSION OF EMERGENCY PURCHASE OF SEWER LINE CLEANER

The Board discussed the need to purchase a sewer line cleaner for the county due to continued sewer line issues and the expense of hiring a plumber each time.

- Motion by Commissioner Brown to declare an emergency and allow the purchase of a sewer line cleaner as discussed with the Chairman to make the final decision on the price quotes. Second was made by Commissioner Erixton, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

DISCUSSION OF GRADEALL REPAIRS

County Coordinator Gary Godwin discussed with the Board the fact that both Gradall's are down and waiting on parts. Mr. Godwin provided the Board with quotes for renting a Gradall if needed.

- Motion by Commissioner Erixton to declare an emergency and to allow the rental of a Gradall if necessary. Second was made by Commissioner Brown, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- County Coordinator Gary Godwin advised the Board that the Graders will be working Friday and Saturday to try and catch up due to the recent rain.
- The Board discussed the X-Ray machine expenditures as submitted by Watson Healthcare. Staff will review the previous discussions prior to a final decision. The Board also discussed the roof contract for the Watson

Healthcare building and agreed to re-bid the roofing project and allow Mr. Decker to review the contract with the contractor.

- The Board also discussed the issue of receiving sealed bids electronically.
- County Attorney Andy Decker advised the Board that the Town of White Springs has signed the Code Enforcement Agreement. Mr. Decker also stated that he is still reviewing surrounding counties documentation as to a possible littering ordinance. Upon completion of his review, he will draft a Littering Ordinance for the Board's consideration. Mr. Decker advised the Board that he will look at the Opioid Litigation issue and provide the legal decision that was approved.
- Commissioner Murphy questioned staff as to the Discretionary Sales Tax. Mr. Decker advised that he is still waiting for the information to be returned by each Municipality. Mr. Murphy announced his annual Cane Grinding and the Board stated that they would be in attendance for the event on Saturday, December 30th.
- Commissioner Erixton requested Mr. Decker to review the Development Agreement with Green Point Research for a deadline or cancelation of the agreement. Commissioner Erixton also requested a one (1) time repair to 140th. The Board agreed by unanimous consent to allow the repair as requested.
- Chairman McCoy stated that the demolition of the Selph home for Ship will be the week after New Years. Chairman McCoy also discussed with the Board the request for a Church sign to assist with direction to the Church. The Board agreed by unanimous consent to allow the sign as requested.
- Clerk of Court Greg Godwin announced that the Courthouse Christmas Luncheon will be held on Friday, December 22nd.

There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Brown adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

RICHIE MCCOY, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

GREG GODWIN, EX-OFFICIO CLERK

